

13^{as} JORNADAS DE ANÁLISIS INSTRUMENTAL

RECINTO GRAN VIA. 14-16 NOVIEMBRE 2011

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ARSENIC SPECIATION IN PLANTS BY HPLC-(UV)-HG-AFS: OPTIMISATION OF THE EXTRACTION METHOD AND APPLICATION TO NATIVE PLANTS FROM SOILS POLLUTED BY MINING ACTIVITIES

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Arsenic is a toxic metalloid widely distributed in the environment. It enters into the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems through combination of natural processes and as a result of anthropogenic activities, such as mining activities, resulting in widespread arsenic contamination of soils and waterways. Arsenic contamination of soil and water poses a serious threat to living organisms, such as plants, which are known to accumulate arsenic in their tissues and exhibit a certain degree of tolerance. However, the estimation of arsenic toxicity requires knowledge of the individual arsenic species present in biological materials; thus, the development of convenient extraction techniques, avoiding contamination, losses and species interconversion, is needed [1, 2].

The aim of this work consisted on the development of an analytical procedure for arsenic species determination in native plant species from soils polluted by mining activities (Mónica mine, NW Madrid, Spain). The arsenic species extraction method was optimised by applying a multivariate experimental design and analysis of variance. The optimisation studies were carried out on the plant species *Thymus zygis* (root and aboveground part), using the ultrasound probe sonication and the microwave-assisted extraction, as well as different extracting agents (H_2O , H_2O -MeOH, H_3PO_4 , AcOH, TMAH). From the results of the optimisation studies, arsenic species in plant samples were extracted by microwave-assisted extraction using both deionised water and 0.5 mol L^{-1} acetic acid. The method allowed us to achieve an arsenic extracted recovery between 20 and 80%, depending on the kind of plant species analysed.

Arsenic species were determined by HPLC-(UV)-HG-AFS, using both anion and cation exchange chromatography. Separations were performed on a Hamilton PRP-X100 anion exchange column, with phosphate buffer at pH 9.0 as mobile phase and using a concentration gradient from 5 to 100 mmol L^{-1} , as well as on a Hamilton PRP-X200 cation exchange column, with pyridine 2.5 mmol L^{-1} at pH 2.65 as mobile phase. The chromatographic system was coupled to the atomic fluorescence spectrometer via hydride generation, with 1.4% (w/v) NaBH_4 and 8.0 M HCl, with a previous photo-oxidation step, which employs a UV lamp and a solution of potassium persulfate. The developed method by anion exchange chromatography led us to the separation of four arsenosugars (glycerol, phosphate, sulfate and sulfonate sugars), AsB, As(III), DMA, MMA and As(V) in less than 17 minutes, with LODs between 5 and 22 pg of As ($100 \mu\text{L}$ sample injection volume). On the other hand, the species As(III), As(V), AsB, TETRA y TMAO were separated in less than 14 minutes, by the cation exchange method, with LODs between 26 and 53 pg of As. The methods were applied to ten different plant species, which contained mainly As(V) ($2\text{--}675 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$), and As(III) at lower concentration levels ($0.1\text{--}9 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$). Furthermore, MMA ($0.5\text{--}0.15 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) and TMAO ($0.14\text{--}0.16 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) were only detected in the plant species *Corrigiola telephiifolia* and *Holcus mollis*, respectively.

[1] M.J. Ruiz-Chancho, J.F. López-Sánchez, E. Schmeisser, W. Goessler, K.A. Francesconi, R. Rubio. *Chemosphere*, 2008, 71, 1522–1530.

[2] L. Jedynek, J. Kowalska, J. Harasimowicz, J. Golimowski. *Science of the Total Environment*, 2009, 407, 945-952.

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INTRODUCTION

Arsenic is a toxic metalloid widely distributed in the environment. It enters into the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems through combination of natural processes and as a result of anthropogenic activities, such as mining activities, resulting in widespread arsenic contamination of soils and waterways. Arsenic contamination of soil and water poses a serious threat to living organisms, such as plants, which are known to accumulate arsenic in their tissues and exhibit a certain degree of tolerance. However, the estimation of arsenic toxicity requires knowledge of the individual arsenic species present in biological materials; thus, the development of convenient extraction techniques, avoiding contamination, losses and species interconversion, is needed [1, 2].

[1] M.J. Ruiz-Chancho, J.F. López-Sánchez, E. Subramanian, W. Gonsky, L.A. Francesco, R. Kukula, *Chemosphere* (2008) 71, 1522–1530.
[2] L. Jedyński, J. Kowalka, J. Harasimowicz, J. Górecki, *Environ. Sci. Technol.* (2009) 43(1), 948–952.
[3] García-Salgado, S., García-Casillas, D., Quijano-Nieto, M.A., Bonilla-Simón, M.M. *Water Air Soil Pollut. 2011* (DOI: 10.1007/s11270-011-0862-z).

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this work consisted on the development of an analytical procedure for arsenic species determination in native plant species from soils polluted by mining activities (Mónica mine, NW Bustarviejo, Madrid, Spain). The arsenic species extraction method was optimised by applying a multivariate experimental design and analysis of variance. Arsenic species were determined by HPLC-(UV)-HG-AFS, using both anion and cation exchange chromatography.

EXPERIMENTAL

OPERATING CONDITIONS FOR AS SPECIATION BY HPLC-(UV)-HG-AFS

★ HPLC	
Pump	PU-2089 plus (Jasco)
Anion exchange: Column	Hamilton PRP-X100 (Phenomenex)
Mobile phase (concentration gradient)	Phosphate buffer 5, 20 and 100 mmol L ⁻¹ pH 9.0
Cation exchange: Column	Hamilton PRP-X200 (Phenomenex)
Mobile phase (isocratic)	Pyridine 2.5 mmol L ⁻¹ , pH 2.65 (HCl)
Flow rate	1.0 mL min ⁻¹
Injection volume	100 µL
★ On line photo-oxidation	
UV lamp	10.570 UV Cracker (PS Analytical)
K ₂ S ₂ O ₈ : Anion exchange	2% (w/v) in 2% (w/v) NaOH (0.5 mL min ⁻¹)
Cation exchange	4% (w/v) in 4% (w/v) NaOH (0.5 mL min ⁻¹)
★ Hydride generation	
HCl	8 mol L ⁻¹ (1.4 mL min ⁻¹)
NaBH ₄	1.4% (w/v) in 0.1 mol L ⁻¹ NaOH (1.4 mL min ⁻¹)
Ar (GL separator) flow rate	250 mL min ⁻¹
Air (drying) flow rate	2.5 L min ⁻¹
★ AFS instrument	
Detector	Millennium Excalibur (PS Analytical)
Wavelength (nm)	193.7
Primary current (mA)	27.5
Boost current (mA)	35.0
Gain	1, 10 and 100

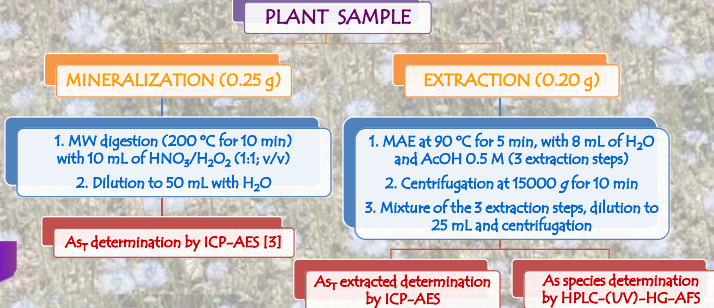
TABLE 1. Factors and levels considered in the full factorial design.

Extraction method	Factor	Level
MAE ^a	Temperature (°C)	50 70 90
	Time (min)	2.5 5 7.5
	Extraction steps	1 2 3
	Amplitude (%)	10 20 30
UPS ^b	Time (min)	2.5 5 7.5
	Extraction steps	1 2 3

^a Microwave-assisted extraction
^b Ultrasound probe sonication

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PROCEDURE



RESULTS

TABLE 2. Optimised extraction conditions and maximum total As extracted (%) for MAE and UPS.

Thymus zygis (0.2 g), 8 mL of H ₂ O				
MAE		UPS		
As _T ext (%)	Optimised extraction conditions	As _T ext (%)	Optimised extraction conditions	
R	34	24	30%	
	90 °C		7.5 min	
	3 extraction steps		3 extraction steps	
AP	36	15	30%	
	90 °C		7.5 min	
	3 extraction steps		3 extraction steps	

TABLE 3. Total As extracted (%) obtained by optimised extraction conditions for MAE, using different extracting agents (n=3).

Thymus zygis (0.2 g), MAE, 90 °C, 5 min, 3 extraction steps, 8 mL of extracting agent		As _T ext (%)							
	H ₂ O	H ₂ O/MeOH (9:1)	(1:1)	(1:9)	0.1 M H ₃ PO ₄	0.1 M AcOH	0.5 M AcOH	0.1 M TMAH	0.5 M TMAH
R	29 ± 2	23 ± 4	16 ± 3	16 ± 3	77 ± 4	80 ± 5	56 ± 5	78 ± 5	80 ± 3
AP	28 ± 4	26 ± 3	21 ± 2	18 ± 3	73 ± 2	79 ± 4	57 ± 3	78 ± 9	54 ± 4

TABLE 4. Results obtained for As species (µg g⁻¹) by HPLC-(UV)-HG-AFS after MAE with AcOH 0.5 M (n=3).

PLANT		As (µg g ⁻¹)				Σ As species (µg g ⁻¹)	Column recovery (%) ^a
		As(III)	As(V)	MMA	TMAO		
A. album	R	4.6 ± 0.3	352 ± 19	n.d.	n.d.	357 ± 19	65 ± 5
	AP	0.48 ± 0.03	10.5 ± 0.8	n.d.	n.d.	11.0 ± 0.8	78 ± 13
C. telephifolia	R	7.5 ± 0.6	188 ± 13	0.64 ± 0.01	n.d.	196 ± 13	38 ± 6
	AP	5.5 ± 0.4	612 ± 24	0.74 ± 0.01	n.d.	618 ± 24	65 ± 4
C. echinatus	R	1.9 ± 0.2	34 ± 3	n.d.	0.13 ± 0.01	36 ± 3	5.6 ± 0.8
	AP	0.14 ± 0.02	27 ± 2	n.d.	n.d.	27 ± 2	52 ± 9
D. thapsi	R	0.4 ± 0.1	31 ± 3	n.d.	n.d.	31 ± 3	39 ± 5
	AP	2.4 ± 0.2	142 ± 8	n.d.	n.d.	144 ± 8	75 ± 5
H. mollis	R	2.2 ± 0.1	74.1 ± 0.9	n.d.	0.16 ± 0.01	76.5 ± 0.9	59 ± 6
	AP	0.50 ± 0.02	10.0 ± 0.6	n.d.	n.d.	10.5 ± 0.6	52 ± 8
J. montana	R	1.74 ± 0.03	54 ± 2	n.d.	n.d.	56 ± 2	51 ± 3
	AP	0.55 ± 0.04	33.3 ± 0.7	n.d.	n.d.	33.9 ± 0.8	53 ± 5
P. lanceolata	R	9.5 ± 0.6	141 ± 5	n.d.	n.d.	150 ± 5	52 ± 2
	AP	0.71 ± 0.03	52.2 ± 0.6	n.d.	n.d.	52.9 ± 0.6	56 ± 3
R. acetosella	R	5.7 ± 0.4	174 ± 0.7	n.d.	n.d.	179.7 ± 0.8	41.7 ± 0.3
	AP	2.8 ± 0.1	48 ± 2	n.d.	n.d.	51 ± 2	45 ± 2
T. zygis	R	0.63 ± 0.05	66 ± 5	n.d.	n.d.	67 ± 5	52 ± 5
	AP	0.91 ± 0.08	33 ± 2	n.d.	n.d.	34 ± 2	65 ± 8
T. ovatum	R	0.81 ± 0.04	72 ± 4	n.d.	n.d.	73 ± 4	49 ± 4
	AP	0.14 ± 0.02	4.1 ± 0.3	n.d.	n.d.	4.2 ± 0.3	76 ± 9

n.d. = not detected
^a Calculated as the ratio of the sum of the As species with the total As extracted

CONCLUSIONS

- The developed method by anion exchange chromatography led us to the separation of four arsenosugars (glycerol, phosphate, sulfonate and sulfate sugars), AsB, As(III), DMA, MMA and As(V) in less than 17 minutes, with LODs between 5 and 22 pg of As, whereas the species As(III), As(V), AsB, TETRA y TMAO were separated in less than 14 minutes, by the cation exchange method, with LODs between 26 and 53 pg of As.
- The chemometric approach used for As extraction method optimisation allows the characterisation of interdependence of different variables as well as the reduction of the number of experiments necessary for successful method optimisation. The factors and levels considered for the optimisation of the microwave-assisted extraction method (MAE) and the ultrasound probe sonication based extraction method (UPS) are summarised in Table 1.
- Optimisation experiments were carried out on *Thymus zygis*, using 0.2 g of sample and 8 mL of deionised water. The optimised extraction conditions for MAE and UPS are shown in Table 2. The best results were obtained for MAE with 90 °C, 2.5 or 7.5 min, and 3 extraction steps. Finally, we decided to apply 5 min of heating in order to use the appropriate extraction conditions both for roots and aboveground parts of plants samples.
- The optimised MAE method were applied on *Thymus zygis* using different extracting agents (H₂O, H₂O/MeOH, H₃PO₄, AcOH, TMAH) (Table 3). From the results, arsenic species in plant samples were extracted by MAE method using both deionised water and 0.5 mol L⁻¹ acetic acid. The method allowed us to achieve an arsenic extracted recovery between 20 and 80%, depending on the kind of plant species analysed (Figure 1b).
- As(V) was the major species found in the plant samples analysed, followed by As(III) at much lower concentration levels. Furthermore, MMA was only detected in the plant species *C. telephifolia* (AP) (Figure 2A), and TMAO in *C. echinatus* (R) and *H. mollis* (R) (Figure 2B).